Migration and ethnicity

Segmented Assimilation, Transnationalism, and Educational Attainment of Brazilian Migrant Children in Japan

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International migration has received a remarkable attention to scholars. Concern for immigration has been recently shifted from the first to the second generation since the number of the second generation has risen dramatically in the immigration countries. Children of immigrants have tended to face the difficulties with adapting into the host society, due to the unfamiliarity with the society or requirement of entry into the even hostile world (Portes and Zhou 1993). Previously, the theory of assimilation was established to make clear the process of assimilation into the host society among immigrants at the turn of the century. It assumes the straight-forward assimilation process which naturally took place across immigrants. However, recent research on immigrant children offered the result which contradicted the assumption of straight-line assimilation theory. What they highlighted is that disadvantaged second or third generation of immigrants remained in the poverty, whereas some first generation of immigrants could attain higher socioeconomic status relative to second or third generation of immigrants. Segmented assimilation theory has been suggested to investigate the variations in the assimilation process which depend on the characteristics immigrants bring along and the context of reception into the host society (Zhou 1997a).

These theoretical arguments have been based upon the experience of immigrants in the U.S. Recent studies on children of immigrants applied the segmented assimilation theory to the immigrants in other countries including some European countries (Crul and Vermeuen 2003), whereas there is less research on educational attainment of migrant youth in Asian countries. Institutional settings with regards to the reception of immigrants into the host society would to a considerable extent affect the assimilation process of immigrants, so research on immigrants in different settings could provide immigration scholars with fruitful findings, enabling further generalization and theoretical construction (Reitz 1998).

This study aims to investigate the effect of family background on transition into high school among children of Brazilian immigrants in Japan. This study uses the quantitative data which is derived from the survey for Brazilian migrants in Shizuoka Prefecture implemented in 2007, where many Brazilian migrants are concentrated. If we use the quantitative data, we can identify the factors which enable upward mobility of immigrant children by comparing individuals in different settings. Segmented assimilation and transnationalism theories help us make the hypotheses for educational attainment among immigrant children.